

# Higher Degrees by Research Procedure 6 Scholarships

## Section 1 - Summary

(1) This Procedure outlines the types of Higher Degree by Research (HDR) scholarships offered, the application, selection and offer process, conditions of awards and variations to scholarships.

## Section 2 - Accountability

Accountable/Responsible Officer	Role
Accountable Officer	Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research
Responsible Officer	Dean, Graduate Research

## Section 3 - Scope

(2) This Procedure applies to domestic and international applicants, scholarship holders and University employees excluding Research Training Program (RTP) funded scholarships, which are handled through the [Research Training Program Scholarships Policy](#) and [Research Training Program Scholarships Procedure](#).

## Section 4 - Definitions

(3) Nil.

## Section 5 - Policy/Regulation

(4) See [Higher Degrees by Research Policy](#).

## Section 6 - Procedures

### Part A - Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
n/a	

## Part B - Types of Higher Degree by Research Scholarships

(5) Victoria University (VU) administers a range of scholarships for candidates undertaking a HDR. Scholarships are funded by the Commonwealth Government, the University or its constituent divisions, or by external authorities.

(6) Scholarships can be one of, or a combination of, the following types of support:

- a. Stipend - a Scholarship to assist eligible students with living costs;
- b. Fee Offset- a Scholarship to assist with tuition fees that would otherwise be payable by the student; and
- c. Allowance - a Scholarship to assist with ancillary costs incurred by a HDR candidate in undertaking a research degree; including, but not limited to Overseas Student Health Cover, relocation costs, thesis printing and academic publication costs.

(7) Scholarships are for the standard duration of the degree. For research masters degrees this is between 1.0 and 2.0 years and for doctoral degrees, this is for 3.0 years (with the possibility of one six month extension). Any period of prior enrolment in a degree of an equivalent [Australian Qualifications Framework](#) (AQF) level may be deducted from the duration of the scholarship.

(8) Research Services oversees the administration of all University-auspiced graduate research scholarships and provides advice and support to VU Research and VU International (VUI) in the establishment, selection and ongoing administration of these scholarships.

## Part C - Scholarship Rounds

(9) Merit-based VU higher degree by research scholarships will normally be advertised and open for at least four weeks. Dates will be advertised on the scholarships website. The ranking and selection for these scholarships takes place through agreed and documented University selection processes as outlined in Part E of this Procedure. VU will have at least one of these rounds per year.

## Part D - Applying for HDR scholarships

(10) Eligibility for scholarships varies depending on the scholarship, and whether the applicant is an Australian student (defined as an Australian citizen/permanent resident), a New Zealand citizen or an international student (non-resident).

(11) An application for a place in a HDR course at VU is not considered an application for a scholarship. Applicants who wish to be considered for an HDR scholarship must complete the online application form for that scholarship.

(12) Industry and grant-funded rounds will run throughout the year according to the requirements of the funded project.

## Part E - Scholarship Selection Process

### Initial assessment of eligibility for scholarships

(13) The guidelines for scholarship eligibility and the selection process are published on VU's [Graduate Research Scholarships website](#).

(14) Research Services oversees the central assessment of all applications received against the eligibility criteria for each scholarship type.

(15) PhD (Integrated) applicants can only apply for stipend scholarships after successfully completing the first year of

the PhD (Integrated) program and have been approved to progress to Year 2 of the program.

(16) If supervision cannot be confirmed, and/or it is determined that the University is not able to resource the proposed project, and/or the proposed project is outside the scope of VU's areas of research focus, the application will not be considered for a scholarship.

(17) The scholarship recipient must not be receiving income from another source to support that student's general living costs while undertaking their course of study if that income is greater than 75 percent of that student's RTP Scholarship rate.

### **Academic Achievement Score**

(18) The Office for Researcher Training, Quality and Integrity (ORTQI) calculates an Academic Achievement Score (AAS) for each applicant.

### **Initial ranking for scholarships by Institutes**

(19) All applications that meet the minimum eligibility criteria will be forwarded to the relevant Institute review panels for assessment. The relevant Deputy Director, Research Institute, or their nominees, shall normally serve on the review panel. Where the potential for a conflict of roles exists, refer to the delegations outlined in the [Higher Degrees by Research Procedure 3 Pre-Candidature and Candidature](#).

(20) Review panels make recommendations for scholarships and may also indicate if they wish to consider the applicant for a full-fee international place or a domestic fee offset place or full-fee place, irrespective of whether the scholarship ranking leads to a scholarship for the applicant. This task is undertaken in consultation with the relevant Deputy Director, Research Institute as applicable.

### **Ranking points allocation**

(21) Scholarships are awarded as a result of a competitive selection process. Scholarship applications will be assessed on academic merit, relevant research experience, publications, relevant work experience, referee reports, and alignment with the University's areas of research focus; assessment may also include motivations for undertaking the research degree and project.

### **Final ranking of scholarships by the University**

(22) Research Services will submit the outcomes to the University Ranking Committee (the Committee).

(23) The Committee will consider the applications ranked in line with the guidelines for each scholarship scheme.

(24) The Committee will be informed if there is a possible conflict of interest where a potential supervisor is also a member of the Committee and this will be managed accordingly.

(25) The Committee is responsible for ensuring an equitable approach in the allocation of additional points, and will finalise the University ranking lists for the various scholarship categories.

### **Ranking and selecting industry - and grant-funded scholarships**

(26) Industry- and grant-funded scholarships will have an Academic Achievement Score calculated. In place of a Review Panel, the Chief Investigator may conduct the ranking and recommendations for scholarships, including the funding partner when appropriate. Relevant research experience, publications, relevant work experience, referee reports and alignment with the University's areas of research focus will be taken into consideration; assessment may also include motivations for undertaking the research degree and project.

(27) The Chief Investigator's recommendation must be endorsed by the Deputy Director, Research Institute or nominee.

## **Part F - Offer of Scholarship**

(28) Each successful scholarship applicant will receive a letter of offer from Research Services advising them of the scholarship award benefits and conditions and will be asked to sign an undertaking about the conditions upon which the scholarship is being offered.

(29) A small number of unsuccessful applicants may be placed on a reserve list and may be eligible to be offered a scholarship if these become available in the event that a higher ranked applicant does not take up their scholarship.

(30) Applicants will not be able to defer their scholarship offer.

## **Part G - Offer of Enrolment without Scholarship**

(31) In the case of places and supervision being available, unsuccessful domestic scholarship applicants, who meet minimum criteria and who have indicated that they would accept a RTP fee offset scholarship may be offered an RTP fee offset scholarship in the designated course. If RTP fee offset places are unavailable, VU Research may offer a full fee-paying place to the above mentioned applicants.

(32) Unsuccessful international scholarship applicants who have indicated they would accept a full fee-paying place may also be considered for a full fee-paying place in the designated course, if they meet minimum criteria and there are places and supervision available.

(33) Normally, all applicants will be advised of the outcome of their applications within 60 University business days of the closing date of applications.

## **Part H - Scholarship Conditions of Award**

(34) The University and awardee will abide by the conditions of award which are detailed in the Scholarship Award Benefits and Conditions document provided to the applicant at the time they are advised of the successful outcome of their scholarship application.

(35) Higher degree by research scholarships are intended to support candidates engaged in full-time research and study. An award holder is only permitted to undertake a strictly limited amount of paid employment as outlined in the Scholarships Award Benefits and Conditions. Some awards allow part-time enrolment for local candidates for compelling reasons.

(36) HDR candidates who have been awarded a full-time scholarship at VU are unable to retain the scholarship if they are also enrolled in another full-time course. In exceptional cases, candidates may be permitted to enrol in another course on a part-time basis subject to approval from the Dean, Graduate Research in consultation with the relevant Deputy Director, Research Institute.

(37) Candidates are only eligible to retain their scholarship whilst they abide by the rules and conditions associated with the scholarship.

(38) If VU Research becomes aware that the candidate is not abiding by the conditions of their award, they will immediately advise the candidate of this and, unless evidence is forthcoming to the contrary within five working days, scholarship payments will be suspended and a formal review will commence.

(39) A scholarship awarded by VU cannot be transferred to another institution, and must be relinquished if a candidate opts to transfer their Candidature to another institution.

## Part I - Variations to Scholarships

(40) Scholarship awardees in receipt of a stipend are able to take the normal amounts of annual leave and sick leave as per the conditions of their award.

(41) Further conditions in the award include access to maternity/paternity leave and additional sick leave. For maternity/paternity leave and additional sick leave, a medical certificate or letter will be required in addition to the signed [Application for Scholarship Leave](#) form. Applications should be submitted to the Manager, Research Funding, VU Research.

(42) For intermission applications, candidates must submit a completed [Leave of Absence \(International\) Form](#) to ORTQI. With regard to international candidates in receipt of VU-administered scholarships, the Manager, Research Funding, VU Research will seek approval from VUI prior to a [Leave of Absence \(International\) Form](#) being processed.

(43) Depending on the Benefits and Conditions of the particular award, (<https://www.vu.edu.au/sites/default/files/student-connections/pdfs/A53-Application-for-intermission.pdf>) a candidate may be entitled to apply for an extension of their scholarship when they are applying for their first candidature extension. If eligible for a scholarship extension, the application should be lodged with the Research Services no more than three months prior to their submission date, on the [Application for Extension form](#) for consideration by the relevant Deputy Director, Research Institute. International candidates should consult with VUI before lodging respective applications for an extension.

## Section 7 - Guidelines

(44) [Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines \(Research\) 2017 \(Cth\)](#)

(45) [VU Graduate Research Training and Supervision Quality and Standards Framework](#)

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	25th March 2019
<b>Review Date</b>	25th March 2022
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Vice-President (Research)
<b>Approval Date</b>	15th March 2019
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Accountable Officer</b>	Corinne Reid Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research +613 99195357
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Anne-Marie Hede Dean, Graduate Research +61 3 99191547
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Elizabeth Smith Manager, Graduate Research Admissions & Candidature +61 3 99194228